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ABSTRACT

A teacher education program at Loretto Heights College (Colorado) integrates multicultural education into an undergraduate teacher education program. Opinions on student needs were gathered from liberal arts faculty, minority representatives, elementary and secondary school staff, teacher educators, and students in teacher education. The diverse background of pupils has influenced American educational development, spurred by pressure from special interest groups, legal actions, and the concerns of educators. The program acknowledges this diversity by seeking to develop knowledge, ability, and attitudes in prospective teachers in each phase of study. The initial required courses introduce basic cognitive information regarding multicultural education. In the sophomore year, candidates officially request admission into the teacher education program, where courses are increasingly method-oriented. When the student teaching phase is approached, a further commitment and a reevaluation process is required. The final phase is one of renewal, where students reflect on the entire cycle and seek a synthesis of the knowledge gained. The entire process may be viewed as acculturating a student into a profession. (FG)

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INTEGRATING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES INTO UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION

Paper by Loretta R. Konecki and Alida A. Stein,
February, 1981

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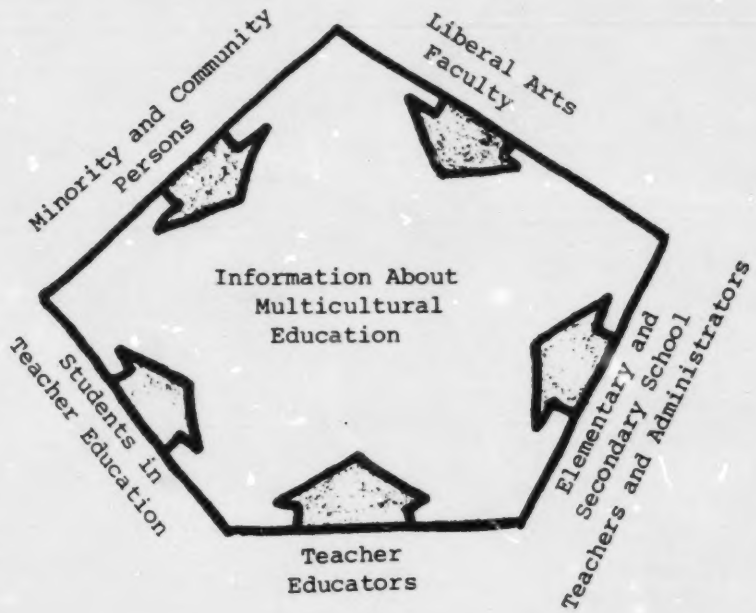
INTEGRATING MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES INTO UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION

Along with many fellow institutions across the nation, Loretto Heights College is reaffirming the importance of multicultural education for the 1980's and beyond, is defining the role and profile of multicultural education at our particular college, and is developing a specific model for integrating multicultural education into its undergraduate teacher education program. The model itself is the outgrowth of a process which is continuous, but which was targeted for special emphasis two years ago. We began by seeking information on the state of the art. Review of the literature, our own and collective experience, and the outcomes of a conference we sponsored just last year, enabled us to identify a system for needs assessment and input for the development of the Loretto Heights College model for integrating multicultural education into its undergraduate teacher education program.

During the information gathering stage of the process, teacher educators and others knowledgeable about youth and multicultural needs came from throughout Colorado to attend our conference. Diagram I shows the five groups of people who shared their perspectives with us. In looking at the diagram, it may be seen that professors from liberal arts and foundations of education, elementary and secondary school teachers and administrators from a cross section of the Denver metropolitan area attended. In addition, teacher educators from colleges and universities, alternative schools, inservice academies, and pupil services offered suggestions. Students from each division and level of teacher education, minority persons, key workers from youth agencies, state department of education, and other community agencies concerned with minorities and youth were active in voicing their concerns and recommendations.

Diagram I: Sources of Input into the Development of the Loretto Heights College Model for Integrating Multicultural Education into its Undergraduate Teacher Education Program.


Minority and Community Persons
Liberal Arts Faculty
Information About Multicultural Education
Students in Teacher Education
Elementary and Secondary School Teachers and Administrators
Teacher Educators

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Having determined the sources and input system for developing our model for multicultural education, we then attempted to classify the needs which were identified. Although there are, indeed, many complex needs stemming from a myriad of problems in contemporary culture, school and society, we feel that it may be useful to reduce these to ten sets of forces.

In Diagram II we note that the children in American schools come from diverse backgrounds with vast variations in cultural heritage, religious beliefs, languages spoken, racial background, sex, physical capability or handicap, intellectual ability or handicap, learning style, socio-economics status, and attitudes toward education and self. Each of these characteristics merits separate attention, and at another time this may be provided.

Each child differs from each other child in some ways. However, when differences cluster, these groupings elicit a different kind of attention and inform educators about curricular and instructional needs. Whenever three or more of these characteristics are present a cluster is created. The presence of a cluster requires acknowledgment and attention by teachers and the school. Let us be alert, moreover, to the fact that the presence of any single characteristic may be a clue to other latent characteristics. For example, linguistically different students may also differ in heritage, learning style, and attitudes. In addition, any single characteristic may require modification or response even though it shall not be defined for our purpose as sufficient for intensive multicultural consideration.

Throughout the history of American education, educators have tried to address the pluralistic nature of American society by meeting diverse needs of the children in their schools. This effort is represented by Diagram III.

As Banks and others (1977) have described, there have been cycles and trends in the expectations of various groups of schools and of society in terms of

Diagram II: Children's Background

Characteristics Which Impinge

Upon American Education

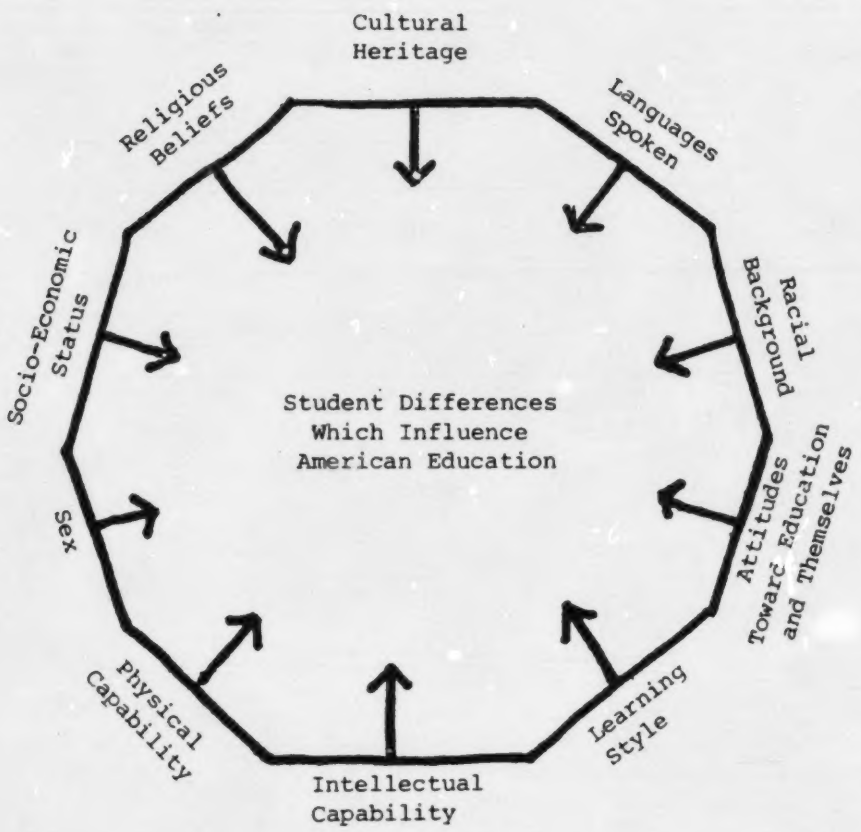

Diagram III: Educators Have Always

Tried to Meet the Needs

of America's Students

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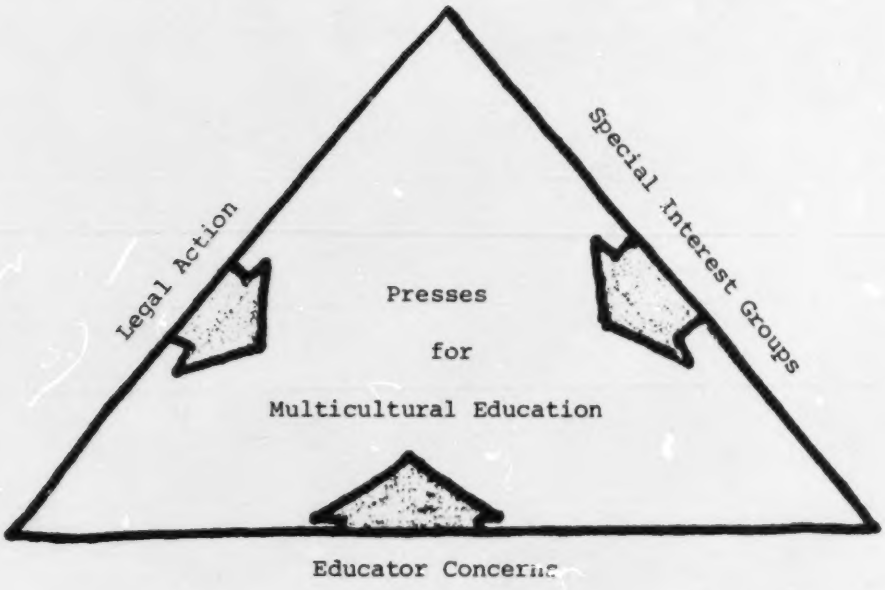
assimilation or cultural continuity of immigrants or subgroups. The extent to which parents and communities have been satisfied with these attempts has varied both historically and on a case-by-case basis.

In recent years parent and community demands have been very visible and dissatisfaction with the school's efforts has been made evident through legal action, through the formation of pressure groups, and in the expressed concern and unrest of some educators. As the "acquiescent" fifties gave way to the unrest and demands of the sixties, the seventies and early eighties reveal the continuation of these three channels or presses toward emphasis on multicultural education within the nation's schools. Diagram IV represents the sources of pressure.

Just as pressure begets resistance, the desire for multicultural education, and for different sorts of multicultural education, has not always been met by educators or by communities with open-arms. As a result one finds strong opposition, competition for allocation of resources, and often what may be called a "backlash" against multicultural education. Negative reactions have been particularly evident in resistance to the facet of multicultural education which addresses differences in language---bilingual education. (Secretary Bell's action is an indication of this.)

To prepare our prospective students to interact positively with pluralistic schools and communities and to meet the needs of their students, we began developing our model for integrating multicultural education into the teacher education program with several things in mind. First were the diverse needs of pupils. Second came the recommendations of our input sources. Third included student background characteristics. Fourth, the historical mission of public schools, to offer education for all, according to their needs was considered, and fifth, the paramaters of our liberal arts college and its students needed to be met. Throughout our endeavor,

Diagram IV: Presses for Multicultural Education



we were mindful of the NCATE standards and tried to develop our model in a manner which would permit us to meet them.

One basic assumption underlies the development of the model: that schools, like society, represent a dynamic tension between the needs, potential and growth of the individual and the maintenance of a society which can provide for, protect and serve its individual members. Our schools, along with our society, are open to the conflict and the winds of pressure which upset the delicate, ideal and undefined balance between individualism and society as a whole. This balance is represented by Diagram V. Like all ideals, the perfect balance is a goal never perfectly attained. In the effort to achieve a balance, equity will falter and injustices will occur.

Acknowledging the winds of stress and the connection as well as lag between American society and American education, we have nonetheless tried to include both multicultural content and processes throughout our teacher education program. Diagram VI presents a matrix through which the content and experiences in multicultural education are intertwined throughout the entire teacher education program. Knowledge and understandings are acquired, abilities are developed and attitudes are formed through the successive exposure, exploration, trial, application, evaluation, and renewal of multicultural awareness, concepts and values in their learning and teaching.

As we began to integrate and draw together our model for including multicultural education competencies into our teacher education program, we were concerned both about the comprehensiveness of what might be missing, and establishing priorities among the items. As a result we have developed and are continually testing a Q-Sort based on the concepts, abilities and attitudes identified through our input process. We would like to check once more what we, our students and others think are most important.

At this time we would appreciate having your input into this process by participating in the Q-Sort with us.*

* The Q-Sort is available by writing Alida A. Stein, Loretto Heights College, 3001 South Federal Blvd., Denver, Colorado 80236.

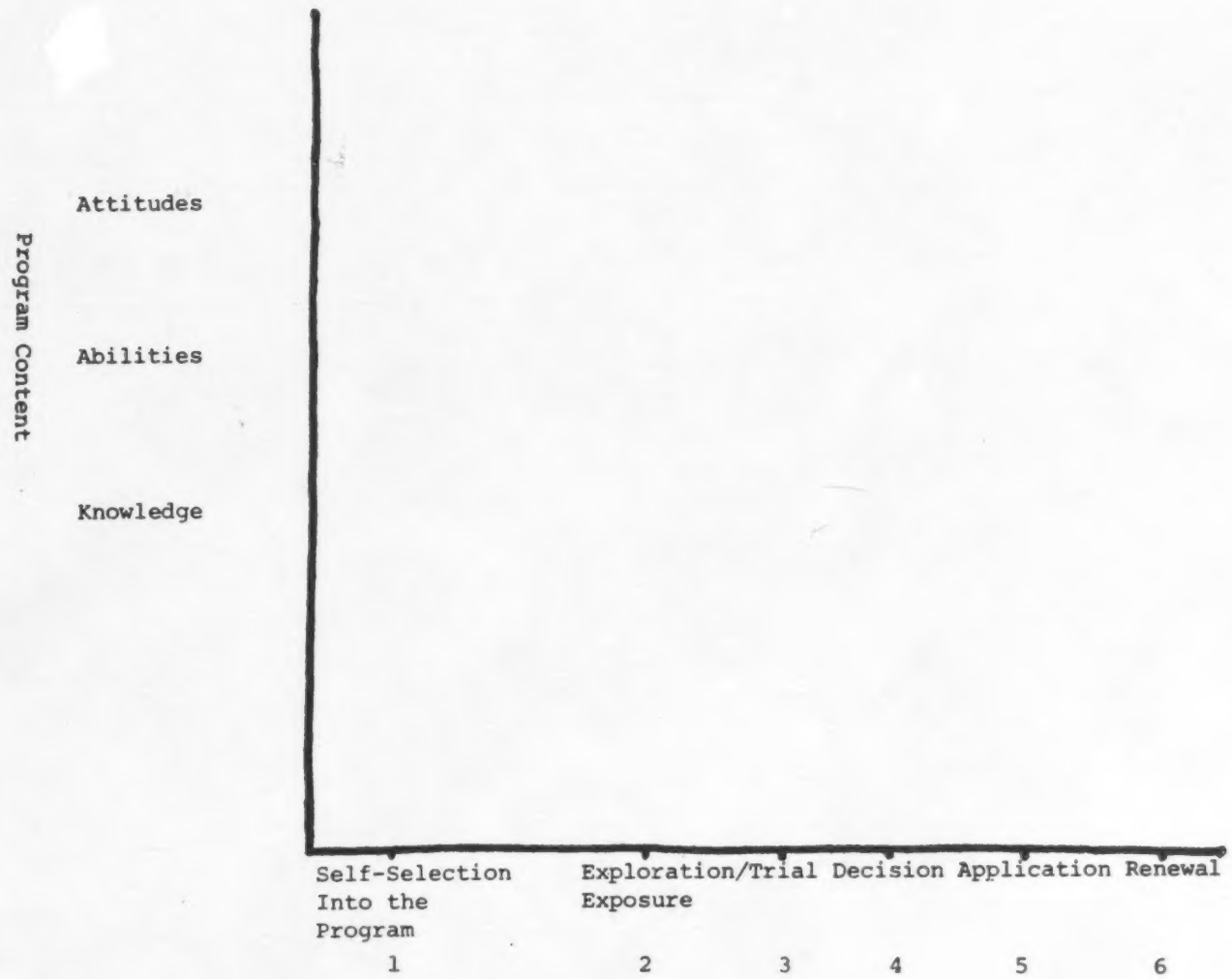
Diagram V: The Balance of Justice

Which is a Constant Ideal for

Both American Society and

American Education

Diagram VI: The Loretto Heights College Model for Integrating Multicultural Education into its Teacher Education Program



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In Diagram VI you will observe that the program content along the vertical axis contains three elements: knowledge , abilities and attitudes. Although some of each may be anticipated at each stage, these elements represent a progression toward a higher order of learning. The horizontal axis enables us to follow the student along her course of study.

Variations in previous experiences, awarenesses, sensitivities and learnings should be expected among the entry level students (Step one). That they are initially self-selected indicates some attraction and feeling of potential competence.

During the next phase of the cycle opportunities for exploration and exposure to urban and suburban classrooms are provided (Step two). Education in Action, the initial course required of all freshmen and transfer students as its name implies, entails academic readings and classroom work and promptly takes the student into the field for individual placement. Other early required courses such as Foundations in Education and Human Development and Learning Theory extend exposure and encourage exploration. In this period we are able to gain some baseline data about individual aptitudes and rapport with multicultural students and help the student clarify career goals and set specific objectives. During this exploration/exposure stage, basic cognitive information regarding multicultural education is introduced. Recognizing the findings of Gluck and others (1975), we strive for "cognitive sophistication" as well as affective maturation.

Teacher educators depend on direct and indirect cooperation with faculty in liberal arts to assist and broaden student exploration and exposure. In traditional areas such as humanities, foreign languages and international affairs, and through specific related coursework such as general psychology, United States government and history, or cultural geography, exposure to differences and a cognitive framework are extended. A bonus for us at Loretto Heights College is the unique campus environment

created by the opportunity to meet, to mix with and to dorm with many international students. An English Language School holds year around classes on our campus. One way in which Teacher Education is capitalizing on this resource this semester is to hold a day long cross-cultural simulation with involvement by students seeking certification, dorm residents and advisors, and the Directors of Campus Life. E.L.S. students will be included in this activity.

Our program and campus include numerous minority students. Deliberately and carefully utilizing the rich variety of national and international minorities is a high priority which can enhance the multicultural learnings, abilities and attitudes of preservice teachers.

A formal decision is made during the sophomore year when the candidate officially requests admission to the program (Step 3). A committee composed of the teacher education faculty, the student's advisor, and representatives from all other program areas considers each candidate on the basis of academic background and standing, mental and physical health, basic skills and demonstrated academic abilities. Taking the step of formal application is a trial decision on the part of the student. Formal encouragement is a trial decision on the part of the faculty.

At this stage the curriculum is geared to more specific learnings and experiences through courses such as Child and Adolescent Literature, Secondary Methods, Elementary Methods in Language Arts and Social Studies, and Techniques for Teaching the Exceptional Child in the Regular Classroom, to select but a few. Additional field work is required as well, with the education student taking more responsibility for directing individual pupils and selecting curricular content. Here she must synthesize and apply previous college work in a particular concrete way.

A semester prior to student teaching, prospective teachers must decide whether or not they wish to continue toward a teaching career (Step 4). This decision is again made by the student as she applies for permission to student teach and by the faculty

as they review the student's progress, commitment and decide that the student meets the criteria for student teaching and ultimately for certification.

More and continuous application of competencies is required in student teaching. Assisted by a weekly seminar designed for enrichment and problem solving, shored by previous methods and content courses, and supported by frequent visits of the college supervisor, the student applies her learnings, tests, and may confirm her interest and commitment to teaching.

Multicultural competencies permeate the entire cycle as high priorities. In selecting classrooms, in providing educationally dense environments, and in identifying role models in the schools, the teacher educator bears in mind each decision's potential for multicultural learning.

After the steps in the application phase have been completed, we enter the sixth and final phase, Renewal. Prior to completion of the final placement process and the job search, the student reflects upon the entire cycle and seeks a synthesis of her learnings. She reviews her decision to enter the profession of teaching (Step 6). The final decision to reconfirm her career choice and to renew her commitment is ready to be made. Since both elementary and secondary education certification programs at Loretto Heights College have student teaching in the fall, students have the spring semester to accomplish this process of introspection and integration. Special education majors, who become certified K-12, do not have as much time for the fermentation leading to a final renewed decision. In any case, for all certification candidates, the spring is a time for seeking information about the field, job opportunities, and establishing goals for self-renewal and further professional development.

Although Diagram VI depicts two linear dimensions, it is evident that both processes are actually circular. (See Diagram VII). The acquisition of learnings, abilities and attitudes is not a discrete process; one builds in each area at every step. Like all schema, ours is not completely comprehensive. It is open ended. Step seven might be entitled Taking a Firm Commitment, and eight, Acculturation Into a Job. Indeed, the entire model for Integrating Multicultural Education into Teacher Education may be viewed and named the Process of Acculturization of a Student into a Profession. This process takes many forms as we previously noted (1978).

Once into a job the graduate faces the challenges of adaptation to the given circumstances and the effective selection, refinement and application of what she's learned. One hopes the new on-the-job learnings will not be entirely novel but instead fit into the matrix developed throughout her preservice experiences. Nevertheless, the reality of having major responsibilitiy for social and academic progress of pupils who differ racially and linguistically as well as in aptitude, learning style, and behavior confronts the new teacher and forces her to enter another cycle of exploration, trial, decision and application.

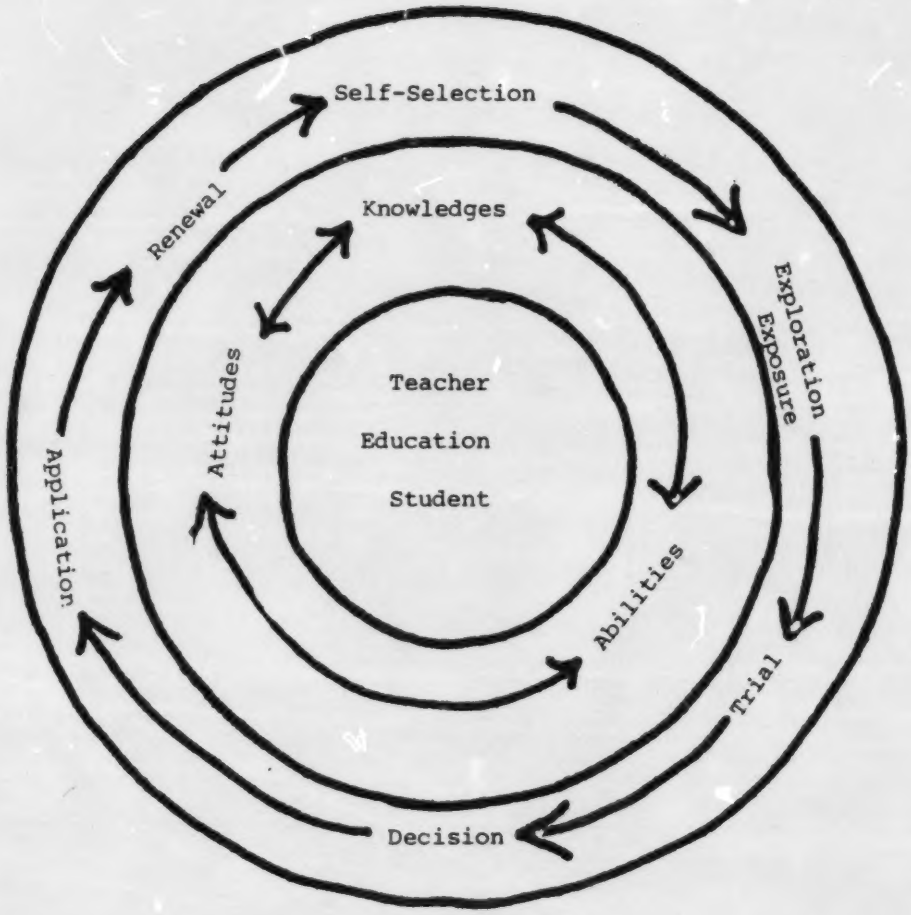
Thus, we have a continuum which originates with the preservice teacher candidates, each somewhat unlike the other, and which flows through the process just described past the gates of Loretto Heights College.

If we take this "cradle to the grave" view of comprehensive responsibility for the acculturization of a teacher, we must admit that at present we do not reach out with the support and assistance which may be needed at the final phase. Who is responsible for helping the newly hired teacher adapt to requirements of the district, school and each child? What, if any, are the boundaries between college training and service and district inservice responsibilities? Should there be more carryover? These and other questions of cooperative responsibilities and endeavors are of general concern to all of us in our profession.

Diagram VII: Continuum of Relationships

in Multicultural Education Program Content

and Processes



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Looking ahead with our recent graduate we foresee at several points re-evaluation of career choice and seeking readjustment or pursuing alternative along career ladders. Both specialization through graduate studies and special assignments and reconfirmation at contract and tenure junctures lie ahead. In many cases there will be matters of individual self-assessment and judgment. However, current trends in certification requirements, reduction in force, in-service requirements and the like will put additional pressure on the individual and shape her growth and direction. Personal decisions and judgment will be affected by district, state and national trends in teacher education.

As we review our model for Integrating Multicultural Education into Teacher Education, we are aware of a number of basic decisions that we at Loretto Heights College have taken. We have elected not to create an add-on program by expecting either new or revised courses to convey the basic principles of multicultural education. Rather, we elected to ensure its infusion into the entire curriculum by combining it at every stage. By guaranteeing work in real schools with real kids, exposure to culturally diverse role models in school and out, theory input and generous opportunities for group experiences at every stage, we attempt to underscore its importance. Legal decisions such as Lau and Lujan are analyzed in Seminars. In many public schools our students may assist in bilingual-bicultural classrooms or in an orientation group where as many as ten different languages are spoken. Multicultural education is not viewed or treated as a thing apart. It is a part of our personal and professional environment. It permeates our program as pluralism enriches our lives.

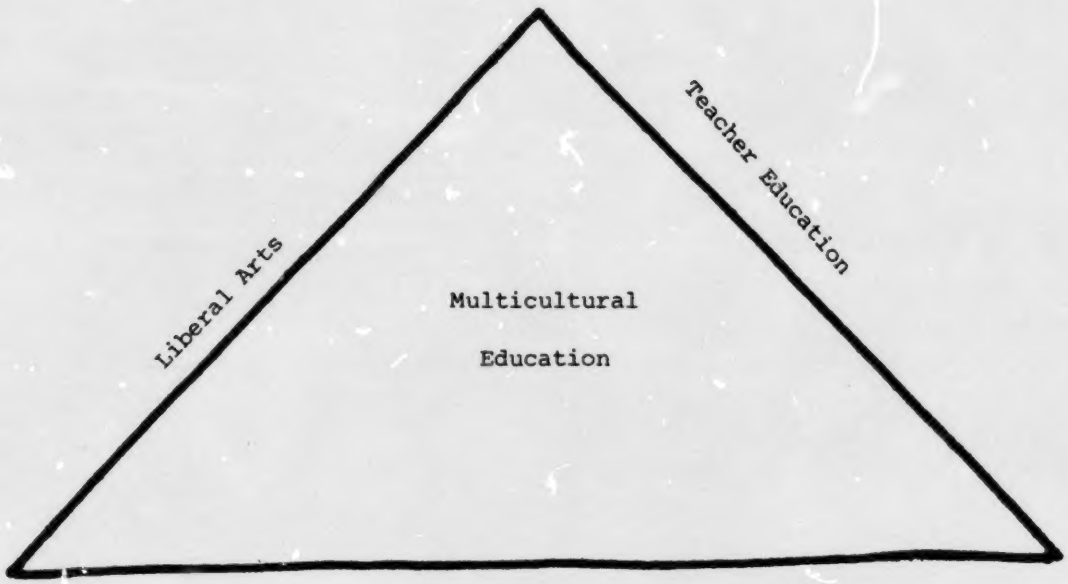
What remains is the task of ensuring that each particular knowledge, ability and attitude identified as important through all our input sources is guaranteed a place in our curriculum design. By structuring given competencies in appropriate courses and steps, we can be assured that the intended outcomes will not be neglected or ignored.

Having identified desired competencies and set priorities, through the help of groups like this, our faculty is now trying to specify which experiences and competencies are most appropriate to each academic or field course.

The next step will be to identify what is not presently being covered and to decide what we wish to introduce and where. Sensitivity to academic freedom demands that the entire faculty be involved in this process. By concurrently considering the needs of the handicapped as well as the gifted and the unique needs of linguistic, cultural, religious and value differences, we are generating an extensive and perpetual process of dialog and consensus for our faculty and our college.

We realize this process will never be completed. By addition, deletion, refinement and reconsideration we, too, will recycle. Ultimately, we are striving for an integrated three-dimensional approach to multicultural education which operates in a number of ways. (See Diagram VIII). It acknowledges the contributions of liberal arts, which lie primarily, but not exclusively, in the knowledge based competencies; it integrates the contribution of the teacher education sequence, which lie primarily in the development of abilities, but also spill over into the other two domains; and, finally,it utilizes the unique contribution of the interactive environment which provides primarily, but not exclusively, fertile soil for the development of attitudes which result in positive multicultural competencies.

Diagram VIII: College Domains Which Interact to Develop Multicultural Education Capabilities in Prospective Teachers



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